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# Sky Lifting His Skirts

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SKY LIFTING HIS SKIRTS

MFA Thesis 2015

Thaddeus Harmon

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## INTRODUCTION

At first, it was the allure of abandonment into and out of time which occurs in the moment of poetic composition—the mystifying tingle of the *being*-stream supplying unexpected actualities, qualitatively of a different order, ringing true and glowing like burning coal (“pouring off of every page like it was written on my Soul, from me to you.”). At first, it was *I*, dim steward of a haphazard thrill, waif proudly haunting winds in wanting--waiting.

Later, the Craft was glimpsed. The elaborate horned wheel of voices.

I saw caped masters balanced on spokes conjuring whole oceans.

To kneel became increasingly necessary.

\*

The Poet is the priest of the invisible.

Wallace Stevens

\*

Language’s invisible keelson, apperceived, then transubstantiated into mind: that’s the idea: shimmering whale spine rupturing the plain plane.

Requisite, the familiar accoutrement: inward reverence, solitude, helplessness--then a wind tugs at the cloak, a pen is needed.

\*

My Imagination is a monastery and I am its Monk.

John Keats

\*

And who then was this kneeler, if not another spoke himself, by happenstance temporal on this shore  
feeling as a body. Likewise unbound & unbidden: seeing. Likewise a witness to and of some inconceivable  
miracle.

\*

Consciousness is mute . . . the words, poets know, can never say what one has seen and felt . . . the poetic  
image preserves the wordless . . . I'm seeking an equivalent for the abyss that precedes language.

Charles Simic

\*

The poet may not like to think that he or she deals in equivalences. After all, there's so much concerted  
effort whirring behind each piquant line. Still, Simic is correct. We are shooting darts down endless  
corridors at targets tattooed to our corneas. The abyss that precedes language is the causative pulse from  
whence the words flow. To produce images that don't obscure the abyss' wordless gaze, but rather keep its  
faceless face unmarked upon.

And just as the painting must be seen in person, the music heard in the musician's fleshly presence, the  
poem must be evoked aloud.

\*

*I* is someone else. If brass wakes up a trumpet, it is not its fault. To me this is obvious: I witness the  
unfolding of my own thought: I watch it, I listen to it: I make a stroke of the bow: the symphony begins to

stir in the depths, or springs on to the stage . . . I say that one must be a *seer*.

Arthur Rimbaud

\*

Earlier it was more important that *I* was the one writing. The result was thought to be representative of an imagined person (mind) who had caused it to result. It was as if the act of writing a poem was limited by the parameters of a habitual self-censor. I was peeking during the kiss. I was bottlenecking all of space and time inside a concept of self. This grew tiresome.

Better to let the dead desk speak. Clunk into the cupboards with the stethoscope for signs of life. Why must the poem play nice with the other poems? Why can't it roll around in the mud a bit, belch curse words with its mouth opened while it chews?

\*

The surrealists assert: unconscious chance (Chance), which our lovely lady science tells us is our Mathematical lineage condition, is in fact the greater author of the rationality we cling to so dearly. Perhaps the oppressively linear Euclidian linguistic thought realms that blossom from much of contemporary societal participation are not capable of properly revealing this origin. In fact, these thought realms seem to intentionally obviate experiential awareness of said origin. Uncertainty just can't be fondled long enough (c.f. the oracular phenomenon of "googling").

Charles Simic quotes Nietzsche: "the alleged instinct for causality is nothing more than the fear of the unusual." Language's standard project, one may venture, is to make usual that which is unusual--this would imply, "all that is."

If “all that is” is inherently *unusual* contra the very notion of usual, we glimpse where we’ve arrived, and why Simic writes: “the random then becomes a matter of obedience to inwardness and calls for an appropriate technique.”

Also, “Everything is arbitrary except metaphor which detects the essential kinship of all things.”

Poetry: our beloved chancy kinship boat.

\*

Twin lights for eyes and emerald snake, flower-tongued, struck from his urgent breathy whispers. What of this technique? Able to unify all in a certain mercifully honest violence.

#### FOLK SONG

Every true poet is a monster.

He destroys people and their speech.

His singing elevates a technique that wipes out  
the earth so we are not eaten by worms.

The drunk sells his coat.

The thief sells his mother.

Only the poet sells his soul to separate it  
from the body that he loves.

Tomaž Šalamun

\*



The imagination is the soul, is the *seer*, is that in which thoughts--the mind--arises. The poet's monkish love compels him to share this experience of mind, to enact it, and in doing so, to destroy what it was, or would be otherwise, unloved, unlooked upon: to sever it from the body and lovingly hold it up to the light in which, for a brief instant, its brilliance wholly obscures anyone or anything else: destroying whatever was and demanding it be made new.

\*

Before, it was: a poem rhymes for no reason (i.e. people write poems for no reason). Now I know: the rhyming *becomes* the reason. Dr. Seuss demonstrates, swinging from a pastel yellow cotton candy ladder: "If you try, / you can think up / a GUFF going by."

\*

To be hefted out of perceptual stagnation, to be invited into the cracks between black marks on the page into the silence that parallels the nothingness from whence this all ker-powed! into now. After all, that silence is the poem's womb.

yes, yes

that's what

I wanted

I always wanted,

I always wanted,

to return

to the body

where I was born

Allen Ginsberg

Still and formless womb. There, crickets creak out moonshine to the sky.

\*

I with Šalamun wonder: “where is my central sky?” Neither of us deign to wait for an answer. What’s one vector over another? Tomaž is too busy embracing the horizon. I’ve found a hole in the sky and am looking into it. In the meantime, here’s the maestro at the flute: “The hunger of cathedrals, silk, the green silk/ of pastures steps over the threshold. I see smoke.” The gestational merges with the spiritual, and the perceptual drifts from color to movement, from eye to foot and back to eye, whose object, “smoke,” is likewise olfactory, conjuring smell. Here, with the senses, he’s wrapped us into it: a swirl of body, urge, and texture (in “The Filth and the Lead and the Clock Tower Ticking,” I begin: “the hunger of green mold, the rind / not made rapacious in streetlight.” His hunger. His green).

To leap into that slit in the sidewalk.

SKY LIFTING HIS SKIRTS

I

## THE CRAFT

Words are barnacles on the backside  
of leviathans made entirely of math.

A poet sees these & hurries  
to her oceanic chamber where liquids & gases lap  
upon each other & the walls permeate light.

The poet is a barnacle.  
She rides what summons her in stillness.

## FACTORY FARM BLUES

Just a beetle skittering over bumblebee  
corpses in the windowsill. Just  
a pig squealing in the waiting room  
at the dentist, in the dream. Then a truck

of chickens on a highway in a blizzard  
nauseated hermit crabs boiling in two ton vats  
a barnacle goose barking like a dog  
its body covered in oil limp bovines  
with plump hindquarters hung upside-  
down over drains the size of bathtubs—

Stop. Light a match to sing

one hymn in these insect-  
haunted rooms. Rake the muck. Outside

a blackbird's blue-streaked back turns purple,  
disappears.

## SCIENCE

I'll call it a fine grooming of the fuzzed knowing:  
one hand washing the other down to the bone.

An ineluctable scratch at the hallowed itch  
to doubt wholly uncertain worded authorship

uncovered a sore no more words could wash.

To some, the dirt dances as animals:  
watercolor, watercourse--weasel whisker.

For some, the unknown isn't made known.

All that's left is to wonder

what is the best way to relish  
the unlit road

## RELATIVITY

Guess it doesn't matter if your fingers  
are sticky or are maroon--chipped,  
slipped into electrical sockets--or if  
they are striped, painted black, made  
to be still in the sun so as to dry. Guess  
it doesn't matter if the banister around  
which a young boy hurls and pivots gives  
way suddenly while he's in a jubilant  
middle-class mid-morning unearned  
melancholia—

while he deserves it. It doesn't matter  
if the banister withstands and he hops  
onto a wicker chair to sit before  
a plate of well-fluffed eggs steaming  
in the citrus-haze of mother's  
mystifyingly orange *wakey wakey juice*.  
He'll still be on time or late for school.  
Listen, it doesn't matter if your socks have  
holes or don't have holes or, who knows,  
whether you've washed your hair or when  
or that you haven't shaved your legs  
in, *howlonghasitbeen?* three weeks  
and, oh, feel how prickly, and oh, I

miss my grandmother because her  
hands were so soft and because when  
I said something wry and made her chuckle  
I felt like I'd played the best music.



## STRANDED AGNOSTIC

The year I spent  
on the moon  
felt like a day.

It was mostly bliss  
and I bounced  
kicking up metals

until my apparatus  
alarmed from heavy  
breathing. There

wasn't much to do.  
After a while  
the sun came up

slinking above the  
earth's blue curve.  
I saw the mess

in my crater.  
How long had it been?  
I scratched my

moonpants. Tried to  
think. Someone  
had said something

about freedom.  
About

freedom and  
the vast expanse.  
Someone had said

something about  
freedom the vast  
expanse and the

eye of god.

## NOT THERE NEVER THE LESS

He was seduced by  
a faint shimmer glassing  
the lectern & then two eyes  
in the grain's whorls. A thing not there  
was there: warped, undeniable.

What was being said was remembered not as words  
but as entities. Exact shapes of tones hum  
along the edges:  
things not there: being.

## UNSEEING SCHIST

all a nothing needs  
is name and ceremony to be alive

blue broken bike light                sedge weed sprig  
still pond water somehow  
undisturbed at top speed orbiting inside the infinite

look at all our dirt masquerading  
around as separate bodies

we used to be rock  
humming choir

single celled slimes that can solve mazes  
now heart drums go drumming in ribcage cathedrals

now warp & woof and the tat of rain on the roof  
bliss of helplessness        river wrapping up a stone

let's trace the causal chain back until  
it snaps

## II

## ORIGIN

He began as a thought occurring  
in an unfamiliar room.  
Before this he didn't exist.  
This happened each morning.  
He then moved  
& the movement had a scent he recalled  
which he followed down a corridor  
into this body.

## UNASKED SUNDAY SCHOOL QUESTION

What if my self-definition  
is *monstrosity*  
& I am  
immense host manifold  
in seaweed motion  
as holy sequence as  
the simplest song?

## DAWN TREADOR

There are none who know. Not as the light  
knows. Not as the lace enacting the wind.

Cotton knows, bidden by bluster.

White man's presupposed gnosis  
made of him a monster

deluded with a power that directly undid him even as he progressed  
his symbolic slave-swept escalator.

He daily awoke, declared a bloodied boot  
clean & slipped it on & kept stomping.

## FOOD PIRATE BLUES

I balance a lit match inside an overturned wine glass

a hollow metal rod issues hot steam  
when this wrist twists

anguish of cows poofed to appetite  
anguish of pigs condensed to lip smack

weight of waste on abandoned plates  
weight of carapace the flourish  
weight of quick crenellations

and the drum the howl grin total vacuity  
the drum the drum the drum

nimbus of my now a vast black space  
holy the empty through which slips

our great inward ceasing our great  
promise of immense stillness

of not ever being found



## CARRION

How many dead things  
does science say are  
now passing through

my body? The number is a box,  
not unlike the dodecahedron  
around which I established

an identity. I wish we could both  
find the weasel's brain to look--  
with its soundless maggots--

comely. See, on the sidewalk  
and in the street,  
what blooms and where a car

streaked guts--this is the shaft  
of our sacred scimitar,  
mid forge, molten drips flung-

careless. Someone said die now, don't  
die later. See, you are a flatness  
continually rising up under satin:

go sit down and breathe about it.

Wherever there's wood or a wall  
I see ancestral faces.

Listen, no matter  
what anyone says an emerald is not  
edible, an emerald... an emerald.

## THE FILTH AND LEAD AND THE CLOCKTOWER TICKING

There's a hunger within my hunger, it's the hunger  
of green mold, the rind  
not made rapacious in street light.

For every membrane: another membrane--  
a threshold, and through it, a threshold.

Sitting up straight, newly--  
croissant of dark in the sheets--  
maybe I am a sac of silt poured out, regardless--

a scuttle interrupts.

Now corks shimmy into milk jugs--  
fuck! this pillow that was duck.

Then a thistle condescends to kiss,  
its lip the cold incandescent

nib of bliss cloak--  
the hole I see of self in moon's half face.

I sit up dim and darting--  
watch the quiet hinge turn,  
watch its quick

## BEYOND BELIEF

As jesus put me on a boat  
he knocked my knee on the dock  
said *whoopsy daisy*.

Into my hand he smacked a wad of grass--  
he cried, *my true lineage was a fish!*

Then my chest exploded  
lotus flowers and sinking I expanded

out and through the physical fix.  
I felt as lichen barked as the seal was the barnacle listening--

the drum conducted thunder as we alit phosphorescent

dinoflagellates furled up the ferns & then  
a nice rain began slipping from our sky

dappled our heads.

## UNREMEMBERING

i.

There is no memory:  
gears dredge in the deep.

Where is the thinker, there is no thinker--  
just thought and sensation  
passing away.

Bodies and titles,  
the flubbing lip flappery that fills  
the emptiness:

sloshers

in the oceans' dark.

ii.

Inert,  
I'm slumped on stacked sticks.  
The tide encroaches.

I'm lit by upside-down faces,  
upside-down smiles,  
                    wet cheeks.

Drab sky, drab season--  
everyone in black,  
everything like tarpaulin on clothesline.

No women.  
Masculine agony gargles,  
greased hair,

flesh sizzle.

My father grabs my wrist,  
places it over my face,  
systematically kicks the twig-raft to sea

A one-footed gull  
lands as the setting sun

turns into a ceiling fan,  
the ocean: a sheet.

## AIR-WALKING

*for terence*

There is no self, shoeless on the scaffold, legs  
dangling with the soap and sponge and glass.

Each day is each day,  
each hour: that hour.

The body electric needs no one  
to sing for it.

It shimmers in its fog,  
yet we sing.

The tools and the teetotalers:  
what flinches, what fidgets, what is flayed  
on polished metal. The carousals,  
the coffee stained carafes and enchanted  
junkie needles: the actual mountains  
of trash. Sometimes a sense  
the sleepless eye has fixed  
its gaze on this flesh castle.

Small mouth noises mustering up  
a mind's world: o those limitless  
untranslatable hummers  
at work in this chest.

A lady taking it off:  
A man trying to put it back together.

Nothing's needed:  
Not one thing is unnecessary:

spontaneous suds slowly squeegeed off the seventy-first  
floor:

barefoot this window  
washer catches the drips  
between his toes.

# III

## WHY NOT CALL IT EDEN

*The dirt isn't exactly  
smiling, she said, scooping  
tiny handfuls then letting it sift  
between her fingers, onto her knees.*

*What'ya call that then, he said, pointing  
to the gladiolus, a honeysuckle cluster, her face.*

*I mean to say: it is ready yet unconcerned,  
she shifted to squat, toes curling into grass tips.  
I mean to say, transubstantiation of inanimate bodies,  
wriggling twigs & minerals, engorged pulsation of skins,  
I mean to say, it has all been a kind of lie,  
this loving of the living.*

The sound of a bull elk bugling is what she remembers  
coming slowly out of his mouth.

## OBJECTLESS REVERENCE

this rock ball rotates around a spherical fire  
mesmerizing auroral streamers

my nectar is not knowing

mist                    first mistress  
second the typhoon the cyclone's roaming  
third                  words                  odd resplendent rocks

*death*                  brilliant obsidian & to live  
means nothing



## THRILL

the word *ecuador* is my mythic river  
my *sebastian* amongst snakes  
weeping wilfred sagging all over the hedges  
unseeable hedges unreal wilfred baby willow  
baby nothing young earth lung too soon  
reaching to be named light rider  
sculptor of pond water in empty cupped hands  
hark *protozoan* sloshscapes hark *ecuador*  
satin-made suture soft sojourn intermittent  
unearthly delight transpiring here as earth  
as timely wobble tilt and yoom as organs  
cited networked participants as indistinguishable  
all at once soundless tone amplified omnidirectionally  
you know for *shits* thrill of words like *elocution*  
*rosary glossolalia* what turning winds have tirelessly toiled  
to encounter *cocksucker* coiled joyfully in hardy  
throats sagacity of impulse uncensored tickle  
& packaged push o empty threat of death false  
premise of prevailing discord not the black box  
*ecuador*

## INERTIA BLUES

I'd like to annul time  
but go on living. In a forest  
sitting in the dirt with a squirrel.  
No thoughts. Just nostrils synchronized  
and gently flaring.

    We'd light a candle that turns  
into a campfire. Then leave.

## IVY

I have  
taken  
sides with entropy.

Where nature dissects  
I applaud.

There is beauty in endurance.

On a highway:  
an abandoned red barn—  
paint flecks flying in wind-whorls  
and ivy swallows the light.

A long rumble, like thunder,  
    in the chest—  
I walk through sun-slants  
in dust-air. All is silent.  
Rafters sprout violets  
as I conjure opaque spirits  
from the walls—nineteenth century  
nudists wearing top hats. They sip  
untaxed tea as we share solace,  
break bread for all the crew cut  
Romans whose outline is erasure.

I walk through columns of sun,  
down rows of wind-planted  
weeds, afloat in viscid air  
    and sink back

to steady combustion groan,  
a potpourri of gray  
    plastic surfaces, iron air  
and the long black snake  
    white-backed  
    striking the horizon.

## THE OTHER SHORE

What was the first word  
fashioned by throat-ribbon

which spooled out into *distance*,  
*horizon*, *helvetian fjord*,  
    *hummingbird*.

Sculpted dross of unused drafting--  
like sawdust made compact  
enough to stand upon:

like the sleep that comes  
after the body  
    after the body  
        after the body.

## NOT AN ALLEGORY

the meeting hall has emptied  
no one asked for refunds  
a guy named felix gave me winsome bouquets of compliments  
that wilted a girl called cassidy stood up without  
pants and gracefully pissed on the table  
we used elephants live elephants well two as  
keynote speakers this pig I had known in college  
came out to all his friends and the banquet hall erupted  
cheerfully we decided not to eat them  
toward the close julia tried to swiftly conjure a new god  
from our collective mindstream cletus  
the jolly eared swamp rat kicked her in the uterus  
and she stopped but the damage had been won  
there was a pooling of focused yearning in everyone's  
thighs people stood up entranced suddenly  
alive to their separate bodies  
they stampeded out nearly trampled me clambering  
horrifically after mirrors

## HER SILENCE AT DEETJEN'S

in rounds as the sun ripples  
encircling turquoise sequins  
cheek glitter gladly refracting in rounds  
under the redwood canopy's interstitial  
quilt work in rounds  
the insects alit likewise sentient  
little wonderers in the Witness

five to five our digits interlinked  
completed on the bench the guilty  
cigarette brandished graciously  
with respect for the fern throned  
buddha's serenity in rounds  
the stones becoming the stream  
the soil laughing in the leaves

## BUCKET LIST

*"I want to bring you the dialect  
of the inaccessible mountains without moving a lip"*

I want to hold your elbows & stare  
until absolutely nothing occurs to us both.

I want to drip the thistle's incantation  
onto your tongue in the morning your eyes wet.

I want to be with you always here mounting the moment  
we don't dare needlessly define.

I want your reflection in my mirror  
your knee knocking mine in the backseat.

I want to undo the threads we call seams  
& see what's behind the bones & see what's behind that.

I want to want what is:  
the shebang.

TO IMMERSE THE CHAIN

as Tomaz Salamun

the hunger of rust, fallow, the green mold  
of retinue steps over the puddle. I see abyss,  
a tack, a bilge hole. The compactness of life  
drinks up the earth, as pearl binds the oyster

truncated in muck. For an instant in the cage  
of others, we lean, we burn in the marsh.  
Crows drink and become beetles,  
pistols find vector. Seaweeds, indifferent,

push aside their cousins, for only a cow  
can be decanted. Where does the ruby come from?  
The frivolity of pigment, hue, prisms?

And their tremendous power to drink up  
the minutest, to turn destiny inside out like a sock  
and play with the toes, to immerse the chain?



## SUN SHACK AT SUNSET

into air another insect hatches  
we notice without acknowledging our noticing

*troubadour* you say                      I say *muenster cheese*  
as if to bite you with a red ant's unseen teeth

special rectangles glimmer all sorts of faces impossible  
images of disembodied zoomings in and out

in my lap drivel drips sideways out of heraclitus  
pissed grasshoppers bloat into locusts

a candied pepita appears in your palm  
where unimaginable bounties undulate

cat piss stagnates in your shoe and oops  
ivy spreads into the drywall for nutrients

while seaweed hordes its sun in secret

## LOOKING

i

a sloppy house is immaterial

the veil is ready to be sliced  
to bits

Nothing masquerades  
inside itself as a somebody with big  
plans and dearly beloved urges

Nothing bursts impersonal  
love the criterion is not being  
entertained by sensation leaking it through what seems  
personal

the criterion is sweat drenched bed sheets  
submission

looking out *is* looking in

ii

what  
recognizes itself  
as sentience

eats itself  
and we think we watch  
while we too eat and are eaten

iii

reality is a television broadcast  
no one watches featuring faceless  
actors plotless vistas soundless orchestral  
scores that emit heat like suns

put up the shades  
what seems to be still still moves  
quite rapidly

what seems oblique and dead and distant  
is closest truest

somehow empty space  
authors this planet a sun worth  
seeing

# IV

## HISTORY APOLOGIZES

It was merely a pious fiction.  
As we know nothing we have not  
the slightest reason to deeply regret the scantiness  
of authenticated legend--the manner in which  
life drifts. Not much seems to correspond fully.

That this death could have been  
a matter of pure chance,  
this life is built upon speculation.

It imposes no strain on our credulity  
to not doubt for an instant the continued existence  
of a constellation that has vanished  
below the horizon.

We admit we did nothing:  
everything felt natural  
in its time--the Always--that's maximum prototype temple:  
organic hierarchy.

We spume forth from it into a dimension of whose nature  
we can only now proffer  
reverent guess.

## DRUMS IN THE DARK

up on this nondescript  
                    tower  
the moth abandons my open palm

I gasp & the flesh dissolves  
I go into there where plain air ensconces memory  
then eclipses it

wind redacts my whistling  
as ancestors wave     manifold  
stitched to a mercurial horizon

transforming  
wishless geometries  
ignite into suns  
actual suns which are dim  
really     this high up

I see now mother  
all this space is spendthrift  
bliss misting  
                    dark bath of your effervescence

there is only glory

as it I am each instant  
illuminated &  
                    extinguished

## MOTH IMMOLATING

She had mentioned *slush gurgle*, that he recalled,  
& *salamander electric* was a nice pair of words.  
He could not recall, however, the beginning-- a time  
when he did not exist. She had said this was the actual  
time, which she called the Timeless.

He recalled not her scent, but, like a tune, there was  
a purple delight she evoked between heavens.  
*How was a person to disengage from the known* he wondered.

Much was marked with murk, but this prospect  
elated him--the unhurried swiping  
away of filths.

He realized there were no more places to be.  
He let his eyes rest on her scarf, the tassels she would twiddle.

## OUROBOROS

*cf peeled sycamore bark*

Lately the aloe:  
its many fingered hum.  
How most living things are water mostly,  
water in molds.

Even a sprig like this--  
Even the seed from which to which.

O shush:  
all occasion transience.

Liquid tao firm in its debris field:  
the horizon note is drone.

Does one touch moss  
or is one touched by it?

Shush.  
Bubbling rouge where the stick poked through--  
moss serpent circle--  
language of scar aswirl in the fallen sycamore's skin.

SELFIE

He came to: a chicken's cluck, watching  
moss desiccate in heat,  
sitting in on the silent dung party gnats celebrate.

He came to: just floating here, indiscriminate.

*Not to be a single being* he heard or saw in his mind  
which was located, he learned, precisely nowhere.

The voice said:

*What exists is inherently bereft of  
description:*

dogwood dozing in early dawn,  
fox skulking in tallgrass,  
a spindled leg unmoving on a sill.

He came to: vastness.

Oiled pale flesh glistening & underneath,  
dark meat.



POCKETS OF LEAD PENNIES

What shall I disturb? I ask  
not one solitary thing.

I request dirt. I order  
insouciance, as a pin

orders slush, as a turnip  
orders on behalf of a starving

boy another moment alive  
in a hive of black holes--

institched to the shifting  
rift & to ride or to be

dragged, rather to be smeared,  
to go under the rug unceremoniously--

toes twitchless--  
no remedy necessary.

Not to shield the eyes from god.

Not to light the candle in the storm.

## TO SQUAT

*Brian Ohio farmhouse 1997*

Let's hear less about inward basin, less  
about contours, systems flexing,  
ruddied slope as the horizon shoots gold.

More about where the toes meet gravel,  
that interstice in which jolts shoot from fingertips  
run between dogs-eyes.

To squat and ponder  
what wriggled in dirt or unraveled like ribbon  
in sunlight's rippling net between my thighs:

maggots in buckeye,  
water's slither betwixt driveway pebbles,

flopper on the porch--  
    river trout *ex nihilo* on that country slab in rain.

EMPTY

Tendrils and tendrils sleek this sleek  
blue ancient engine's green.

The dirt orients us.  
No perfume lasts long.

Transparency is hollowness.  
Hollowness.

Omniscience is a hoax.  
No one asks: no one asks.

Smudge of dust, beetle bumbling up dung,  
the bristled robin's chest.

Root is the window:  
bare bivouac of being.

Root is shadow:  
root's root.

## AGAINST THAT GOOD NIGHT

we have no rights  
existence is undeserved  
let alone survival

do not rage                      we are meant to end  
we live because of a billion dead bodies  
it took a whole universe to conceive us

find an empty hand  
to hold

## WEED PILE

the catalyst was his hedgerow  
how he saw it was chosen & lived rowed in raked imbecile neatness  
while on the sidewalk the unchosen pile looked somehow  
more beautiful serene in the lamplight giving

just like the faint persistent groaning behind metallic objects  
in his various rooms rooms variously that  
had made him entirely what he thought he was

that night the hedgerow made it clear he was not  
a ghost of tumbling thoughts trapped in a dark cathedral  
he had made no choices

the weed pile was his heart had become his homeland  
as they say all of them the sayers that have been  
& each word ever said in each briefly heard language

he no longer gathered a single ream of streaming shadow  
only the mirror's facelessness remained

V

## THE MIRROR BLINKS

What seemed certain  
was that he could not  
determine what would occur to him  
or when.

The application of intense effort,  
while inevitable, proved irrelevant.  
Who or what watched the arrival  
also viewed the departure.

He found it  
possible only  
when he asked for nothing  
to be overcome by the miracle.

## CONVERSATION WITH GOD'S BODY

The feeling of god without a god  
came while I sliced apples

& I smiled but was not smiling,  
nor then was it I as a who doing.

There were invisible chains haranguing in this chest.  
There was a smudged glass of water shivering in light,  
the soup was a singing.

Creatures in corners and crevices all alit--  
every shadow gathering to be again shone out.



## OUT OF BODY

*I am not anything that can be said about me*, a voice  
is saying. The oak's motion is mapped in shadow on the far wall.

& the lout's eyelash:  
its flea.

The wrinkled pillow's pig's ear  
bent.

The celery's  
yellow inner circle. Flies, unconscious,  
in the mint.

A bat-crammed steeple, the basement,  
our basement: its child spiders,  
its wall of mildew steadily  
erasing our books.

## QUASAR IN THE SKULL

what the mind cannot imagine is itself  
a sun comes out of a sun comes out of a sun

nothing actually begins

let's focus on frog skins or better  
    cilia that move toxins with snake waves  
out of throats

the absurdity of the idea of solitude  
    circuit boards                      sea finches  
a nice rush through unseen piping

nothingness                      a calligrapher's private white ream

fine      dip a pig fritter in chocolate      spritz a little  
essence of magnolia gingerly over the shit ledges

day will try to stamp out night's white scintilla

no matter

take a seat anywhere

## SKY LIFTING HIS SKIRTS

Any longtime tenant of solitude knows:  
no door is locked--there are no  
panes--& gusts blow through  
like forest messengers.

Tenants know the way things have always been done is to be made  
meticulous note of, then disregarded.

As the boundaries topple, listen:  
stars silently grapple in space.

Friends, there is an inward inlet in you out of which  
this galaxy emerges.

NADA BRAHMA

Not one exists

who can straighten out that bent  
and twisted knottiness:

the fresh face you realize  
you no longer have.

Waking thought behaves towards perceptual material  
precisely as the tigris river: cutting a broad murky swath  
through the hemorrhoidal influences.

Consider the erogenous significance of the anal zone:

the noise that enters through the ears  
and unlocks the eyes.

## CENTRIFUGAL RIDDLE

if *mine* is the answer  
to *whose mind is this*

who is asking  
who has ever asked

## NOT HIDING

Stood still on cement--

Saw sequins glint winkily,  
speeding by. Saw myself--  
lots of bodies: no legged leafy  
hairy spherical undifferentiated  
yet persistently apparent multitude.

Discs fit snugly into slots & spin  
& spin. Song is the soup in the cauldron.  
Shut up about speed.  
Shun skill.

The Diamond is not hiding in any mountain.

## NOT LUSTROUS

There is a whole uncognizable topography--  
an inner visionless echelon--

where one laughs long at the naked shape  
of words---unthinking, pillowed by winds.

The metaphysical perimeter is like water--  
water meeting other water. Light's luster

is not the final vision. When you have reached  
the bottom of the well, let go of the rope.

## JHATOR

before we mention the crematorium  
before silt eye before tulle drape aflame

one must understand      as above so  
below means largely      stillness  
                sound that is sight of horizon

this body was is a spacesuit  
that you inside yourself  
is me  
and also we are sun and before sun  
together outside forever moving

i'll proffer you  
                i'll put on your pestilence  
if after i'm dead  
you make my thighbone into a horn  
you go to the mountain  
                            and heave me there

call it sky burial

the rest palm into blood balls  
roll them to the vultures